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Editor

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Sermons I Wish I Had Heard

The Rev. Harry R. Butman
Dedham, Massachusetts

THERE is a distressing amount of mere competency in today's pulpit. Competence is not so distressing as the lack of it, to be sure, for often the reasonably literate hearer who has come to the house of God determined to give the preacher the benefit of a charitable judgment has inwardly winced at the grammatical mayhem and illogic issuing from the sacred desk, and his determination has been washed away by the flood of incompetency. Yet competence too has its lacks. It feeds neither souls nor imaginations. It is good staple fare, and nothing more. One wishes to hear something better than mere craftsmanship. He hungers for the great, the unforgettable.

This wish is intensified by the reading of sermons preached in the notable pulpit of Erewhon. The sermons in literature exceed those of Suburbia and the homiletic press in such a manner as to underscore Christ's wry observation that the children of this world are wiser than the sons of light. Perhaps if the great novelist had to deliver a discourse at 11:15 each Sabbath morning, Pegasus would not fly so high. But certainly the sermons preached in the Never-Never Land of the novel are astonishingly strong and beautiful. Possibly the best of them is the stormy oration of Father Mapple's in the gale-lashed chapel at the foot of Johnny-cake Hill in New Bedford—that sermon which Herman Melville's Ishmael heard before he set out with Captain Ahab in chase of the symbolic white whale. If you would add something to your next sermon on Jonah, take *Moby Dick* from your box of college textbooks and reread that mighty exegesis, which ranges from an almost farcical colloquialism to Job-like prose in the peroration.

Perhaps the best sermon on hell in literature is that preached by the Jesuit missioner in Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist As a Young Man.* (Reality outstrips fiction here; great as the work of the Irish master is, Jonathan Edward's towering logic, building on the granite of a monolithically consistent Calvinism, produced in the sermon *The Future Punishment of the Wicked Unavoidable and Intolerable* the most terrifying discourse ever written, to one man's mind, at least.) The first section of the sermon in the *Portrait* is a development of the physical miseries of hell of such frightening power and intensity that Stephen Dedalus—and there is little doubt but that the novel is autobiographical here—is literally nauseated when he reaches his room. The second section deals with the spiritual agonies of hell; the "poena damni"—the pain of loss—the pain of conscience, the pains of extension, intensity, and eternity. Thomas Merton, the important young Trappist mystical writer, pays high tribute to this discourse. In *The Seven Storey Mountain,* his best-seller of a few years ago, he says: "I . . . was fascinated . . . by the priest's sermon on hell. What impressed me was not the fear of hell, but the expertness of the sermon. Now, instead of being repelled by the thought of such preaching—which was perhaps the author's intention—I was stimulated and edified by it." (But one of the boys at Congowes Wood has a more normal reaction; "He put us all in a blue funk.")

I

We could, of course, pursue the subject of literary sermons far. Elmer Gantry's sermonic fugue on a theme by Ingersoll would afford comic relief in such a study. Winston Churchill's (the American) sermon in *The Dwelling Place of Light,* in which the socially-minded young rector tangles with the great financier, although written about the time of the great Lawrence Strike of 1912, has a curiously contemporaneous swing. And while one hesitates to use the word "literature" in connection with *In His Steps,* for massive weight of influence the discourse with which Charles Sheldon's book opens cannot be ignored. While great clerics march across Shakespeare's page, he has not formal sermons, unless certain set speeches by princes of the Church may be so classified. Probably the dullest is the archbishop of Canterbury's tedious exposition of the Salic Law in *King Henry V.* Dramatically exciting is the passage in *King John* in which "Pandulph, of fair Milan Cardinal" sets forth the claims of Rome in proud verse.

By which means I may modulate from the subjects of sermons I couldn't hear because they were never really preached to a consideration of sermons I wish I could have heard but was prevented by barriers of time and place. There are many scriptural sermons I wish I had heard. The Old Testament has a plethora of riches. I would like to have been in the camp at the foot of Sinai when Moses came down from the presence of the Lord, the glow of the Shekinah yet lingering in his eyes, and spoke the Ten Words. I would like to have been listening when Nathan told the parable of the ewe lamb with its monosyllabic, king-crushing conclusion, or have stood upon Carmel when gaunt and furious Elijah denounced the hesitant people. But of all the homiletic wealth of the Old Covenant I would like most to have heard Jeremiah's Temple Sermon. (Jer. 7;1-15, 26;8-24). For generations, since that morning when dawn discovered Sennacherib's host lifeless and pale about the city walls, the priests and rulers had snugly assumed that Jerusalem, site of the temple of the Lord, was immune from evil visitation. And then appeared in the court of the Temple a brooding, sad-faced man who quietly, unforgettably, spoke an oracle of doom upon both Jerusalem and the house of the Lord. City and shrine were to become like jackal-haunted Shiloh, once smiled on by God, now desolate under his curse. Small wonder that as he finished, "all the people took him saying, Thou shalt surely die."

II

Shall I choose from the New Testament Peter's mighty revival exhortation at Pentecost? (three thousand converts — still the record) or Paul's polished effort on Mars Hill? I should like to have heard the shift in style that night at Troas when Paul "was long preaching" (literally, to argue) and poor young Eutyches—he may have been pulling an oar all day—fell down from the third story window and was revived. But after that, while Paul continued until dawn, he "talked." You will recognize the word as the root of our word homiletics, and you may construct your own moral.

It is unlikely that the Sermon on the Mount as Matthew gives it was ever preached as one continuous whole. It would have been an impious as well as an impolite intrusion to have eavesdropped while Christ preached to the woman at the well. (That magnificent discourse to a solitary woman of easy virtue! "His ways are not our ways.") I think that if I could hear but one sermon of Christ's, it would be that word he spoke at the Last Supper after there had been unseemly strife among them as to who should be the greatest. There were pale puzzled faces in the flickering candlelight when Majesty put on the garment of humility.

And when I think of the choir of great voices that have sung Christian truth in

the long course of history I become confused. Crysostom, Gregory the Illuminator, Augustine, Francis of Assisi (the sermon to the bird or the homily to Brother Wolf?) Bernard of Claivaux, Meister Eckhardt, Martin Luther, Fenelon, John Donne, John Bunyan, Jeremy Taylor, John Wesley. The roll is long and noble, and how shall one pick the best of their discourses? I shall be shamelessly provincial, and limit my choice to three, all in the New England tradition.

III

The first is John Robinson's farewell to the Pilgrims at Leyden. While we do not have the manuscript of this discourse we do have Winslow's report of it. Very familiar is the famous sentence exhorting the departing flock to remember that "God hath yet more truth light to break forth from his holy word." But there was a wise and practically unknown bit of advice which followed the familiar rede. "Here he put us in mind of our Church Covenant (at least that part of it) whereby we promise and covenant with God and with one another, to receive whatever light or truth shall be made known to us from his written Word; *but withal he exhorted us to take heed what we received for truth and well to examine it before we received it.*" The italics are mine. Robinson was wise enough to know that all that was new was not necessarily true or enlightening. But I would have rather watched faces than listened to words that day when the Speedwell tugged at her rope in Delftshaven, for the little flock was leaving the beloved shepherd, and in some minds at least there must have been a dark premonition, the times being troubled and the waters wide and stormy, that never more would they see his face or hear his voice.

We should have a lay sermon, and since my New England locale rules out the *Gettysburg Address,* I choose Thoreau's *A Plea for Captain John Brown.* This was a speech made by Thoreau to a meeting of Concord citizens which he called on October 30, 1859, shortly before Brown was hung. The *Plea,* far less widely known than *Walden* or Civil Disobedience, is an angry and penetrating discourse. Thoreau was fascinated by a man who was a transcendentalist in action, in contrast to the Concord transcendentalists who stayed safely in the realm of words. He was exasperated by the way in which the Northern press, even "The Liberator," dismissed the Harper's Ferry raid as the act of a madman. Thoreau saw in the whole episode a man of ideals defying in concrete fact the edicts of a corrupt government; it was a case par excellence of "moral man and immoral society." The address glitters with the forked lightning of insight and superb contempt. I do not know the name of the Concord citizen who bitterly said that Brown would die "as the fool dieth," but he must have writhed when the rapier of Thoreau's edge wit sliced into him. "Which, pardon me, for an instant suggested a likeness in him dying to my neighbor living." Even the American Board received some of the spillings of Thoreau's acid in that speech. I would like to have been on a back bench in Concord Town Hall that day when an assembly of men which perhaps no town or even city in America could have matched for genius, listened to an equal excoriate them for cowardice and expediency. The talk on the steps afterward must have been worth listening to.

IV

One last sermon. Of the discourses of that New England giant Jonathan Edwards, I would like most to have heard the *Farewell's Sermon* at Northampton, when, after 23 years of service the great theologian was dismissed in an atmosphere of rancor and pettiness. There had been minor tensions in Northampton after Edwards had begun his work as colleague to his gifted grandfather, Solomon Stoddard, but in the revival of

the winter of 1734-35 all party strife was swept away. Then the glory departed, and factionalism began its evil course anew, interrupted only by the enthusiasm of the Great Awakening in the early 1740's. Then came trouble over slow salary payment and the climactic "bad book" episode. Five or six boys from families of lower standing in town somehow got hold of a textbook on obstetrics and passed it around until even the children of the "best families" were involved. Jonathan Edwards was strangely unworldly and inept in dealing with the matter, and it soon became a fight over whether authority should lodge in the pulpit or the pew. Edwards won, but he was wounded, and even though he retained his pulpit for five years the tides were streaming ever more strongly against him. On June 22, 1750, he was dismissed by advice of council and on July 2, he preached his formal Farewell Sermon. For years the town had been divided by savage partisanship and no person able to attend worship was missing. Many things had been said, but this day Mr. Edwards was to have the last word.

He chose II Corinthians 1;14 as his text, and his doctrine was this; *"Ministers, and the people that have been under their care, must meet one another before Christ's tribunal at the day of judgment."* Two things in this discourse impress me strongly. (You will find it well treated in Ola Elizabeth Winslow's "Jonathan Edwards.") One is the setting of the temporal quarrel against the backdrop of eternity; the other is the quiet, unalterable conviction of his rightness. There are no sneers, no unanswerable inuendoes, no attempts at justification of particular acts. He speaks to group after group; the professing Christians, the unsaved, those under conviction, the young people; and to each he presents with quiet, inexorable insistence that far off day of judgment when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed. He saw the whole sad wrangle *sub specie aeternitatis,* and he said goodbye without wrath and without tears.

And yet I find a strange, almost disturbing mood underlying the whole discourse. It is a mood for which no single sentence can quite account, but implied beyond mistake is this thought; "When, on that distant day when time is no more, we stand together before the dreadful judgment seat of Christ, you will then realize that I was right." How silent the packed and spacious house must have been as the preacher, his voice not lifted, his eyes moving (as his custom was) from manuscript to gallery and back again, never resting upon a single face, spoke these passion-drained words of superbly certain rectitude. With what feeling did the people look their last on the thin aristocratic face, made even longer by the snowy panel of his bands, and the high white brow above it? Then he closed the little hand-stitched sermon booklet, crowded with angular writing and interlineations, said the benediction, and went forth to the exile of Stockbridge, to the Indians and his four by eight study to the *Freedom of the Will,* and to intellectual immortality.

These are some of the sermons I wish I had heard. What are your choices?

The Keys of the Kingdom

The Rev. Z. M. Bressler

Red Cloud, Nebraska

KEYS are almost useless unless they make it possible to open a door or make it impossible to open it. Life gives us the opportunity of opening innumerable doors. The keys of consciousness, muscular co-ordination, and intellectual perception have been thrust into our hands and some doors have been opened. We open and close our own doors. We turn the key in the lock that opens the door to happiness or misery.

We have all seen the picture of Jesus standing at the door and knocking. That door, and many others will never be opened unless you get up from your complacency and lift the latch or turn the key and then open the door. As long as there is life and intellectual perception it is never too late to turn the key that may open for you a new world of Christian adventure. The thief on the cross had little time but when he said, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into Thy kingdom," he turned the key that opened for him the door of Paradise. How much of the thrill of Christian adventure he had missed by not turning that key when in his early youth.

We who live in this twentieth century are living in rooms of luxury because we are heirs of men who have realized the keys they held in their hands and the potential possibilities of the right use of those keys. The pioneer unlocked the virgin soil and opened the prosperity of the agricultural regions of this great land. The inventors have turned the keys that have unlocked the shackles of physical drudgery that was the lot of our forefathers. The botanists, the explorers, the scientists and many others have opened doors of blessings for humanity, the value of which is beyond human computation. We must never believe that our standard of living is the Kingdom. It is not Utopia, but it is something that indicates that man is differentiating himself from the animal and the primitive, and the barbarian. Like the tides of the sea, so man surges forward in the direction of civilization and then after a few hundred years reverts back in the direction of barbarism, but each surge forward finds man on a higher plane than any that preceded him.

The sacred paintings and sacred music that came out of the Middle Ages indicate that in the presence of material chaos and confusion the over-centering mastery of human aspiration was devotion to Jesus Christ. Those immortal artists and composers unlocked the doors of the Dark Ages and let in the fresh air of the reformation. They forged their keys at the center of the storm and the doors of religious emancipation were opened.

In the sixteenth chapter of St. Matthew's gospel and the thirteenth to the nineteenth verses you will find thoughts similar to the following expressed. — When Jesus had entered into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi he asked his disciples, "Whom do men say that I am?" and they answered him, "Some say John the Baptist: some Elias; and others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." He said unto them, "But whom say ye that I am?" and Simon Peter answered him, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Then follows a verse of Jesus' commendation of St. Peter's con-

fession. In the next verse Jesus replies, "And I also say unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

I

Our Roman Catholic friends maintain that as the revelation of the identity of Jesus Christ was given to Peter, so a special revelation of the Christ is given to the Pope and the Priests of the Roman Catholic Church. They further maintain that St. Peter was the first Pope of the church and so recognized by Jesus Christ in these verses and that Jesus gave unto him the authority to control the destiny of every Christian believer. That at his word they would be admitted into heaven, and by the same token excluded, also that at his word they would be lost to eternal punishment.

We, of the Protestant faith maintain that the confession that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God is the rock upon which the church is built and the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church or the soul that is anchored in that confession. We will admit that Jesus gave Peter recognition of his personality, which through the transformation of the Christ became a rock and foundation of faith following the days of Pentecost. He, who at one time denied that he knew Jesus had received the courage by which he was enabled to condemn the Jews for the crucifixion of the Christ. We maintain that every believer, or unbeliever either locks or unlocks his own gates by his acceptance or rejection of Jesus Christ as the Son of God and as his personal Saviour. The keys which the Lord handed to St. Peter that day were those which would give him power over his besetting sin. That confession is the key that unlocks the door to a triumphant Christian adventure. Martin Luther is given the credit of maintaining that every Christian believer is his own priest and self confessor.

II

If St. Peter had held the power which our Roman Catholic friends maintain, he no doubt would have locked the gates of earthly ministry against St. Paul when he, St. Peter maintained that none but the circumcised should be admitted into the Church or the Kingdom of Heaven. Most of us likely have held keys of potential possibilities which have been lost or have become useless because we failed to use them. Not all our talents have been so used as to become stronger and to bear fruit. Whatever the use we make of our keys they will come nearer to unlocking the gates of heaven when we use them for other purposes than discrimination against others who have built their faith, as well as we, upon the confession that in all things Jesus Christ shall have preeminence.

St. Paul was a man who held a great string of keys. What gates he could open because he was a Roman citizen. What pride he felt because he was an honorable citizen of the city of Tarsus. What doors he could unlock because he held the keys of Doctor of Philosophy, and Doctor of Divinity. Did he not say that he had been brought up at the feet of Gamaliel? Yes, he had everything, and yet you hear him say in the way of speaking, "This is the master key, I am determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

An incident involving the lifelong bitterness and hatred of two neighbors came to pass in the following way. One of these men owned a dog which he prized very highly, the other was a feeder of live stock. One day this dog with many others chased some of the feeder cattle to such an extent that one of the steers was killed. The owner of the steer took his gun and killed the dog that was prized so highly by its owner,

and from that day on neither man would forgive his neighbor. Almost every community can verify this story in one form or another. When I think of the implications of this incident I can almost hear the Master say, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth will be bound in heaven."

We are told that St. Peter came to Jesus inquiring how oft he should forgive his brother if he sin against him, even until seven times. And Jesus replied, "Not only seven times, but seventy times seven." "Whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom."

The Parson; Prig or Playboy?

The Rev. John R. Scotford

Mt. Vernon, New York

"TO set apart for the Christian ministry" is the ancient phrase which our fathers used when they ordained a man for the service of the church. How *far* apart he was to be set has never been defined. In Protestantism a clergyman can live quite apart from his people, or he can be closely identified with them. Most ministers are somewhere between these extremes.

The first might be called the Man-of-God conception. The Roman Catholic Church carries it to its logical conception by requiring celibacy, an ordered life, and submission to the authority of the hierarchy. In practice the priest lives quite apart from his people and is even separated practically from his own family. Protestantism regards celibacy with suspicion rather than reverence. Once a man is married it is difficult for him to live a life that is utterly different from his fellows, but there remain other ways in which he can be quite separate. He can be a scholar, far more interested in ideas than in people, and in this way he may become a recluse. Most American communities have so little understanding of the man devoted to learning that they hardly know what to do with him. Or he may become a prophet proclaiming new truths. If these are in harmless areas, he may be tolerated; if they contravene the habits or interests of his people, he may be set further apart by suffering the lot of the martyr for truth. Or he may follow the path of saintliness. If a man lives a self-sacrificing life he will be honored, but he will also make his neighbors and church members uncomfortable. For a saint to be popular requires remarkable human grace. So long as a minister conceives of himself as primarily a man of God the emphasis will fall on those things which separate him from the laity. He may dramatize this difference by his attire or even his manner of speech. The calling may swallow up the man.

The other extreme might be called the son-of-man conception. The basic idea is that a minister's usefulness and power depends upon his identification with his people. From this point of view, the more that he is bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh, the more he enters into the life experiences of those to whom he ministers, the better. This can be done in a variety of ways. A woman once said to me, "No man can really minister to the needs of the people of our church without attending our cocktail parties." Many a minister has felt called to get close to his people by frequenting the country club and shining on the golf course. Here and there a minister dabbles in politics and may even hold a position in the Republican Party. More com-

monly he becomes a community leader. He becomes a pillar of the Rotary Club, one of the sparkplugs of the Community Fund and is known and widely honored by the leading citizens of his city. He lives and dresses as much like his church members as his means permit. He is flattered when people say, "You are not like other ministers." Religion continues to be one of his interests, but it has many competitors for his time and energy. His calling is subordinated to his position in the public eye.

Each of these conceptions has its disadvantages.

* * *

The man of God may get so far away from his people that he does not know what is going on in their minds and hearts. He may be unable to communicate the truths which he holds, or to inspire others with the motives which rule his life. Such men are likely to be oblivious to the church as an institution. Their congregations may not prosper. Most communities have some measure of respect for the learned minister, the protagonist of strange causes, or the saint or even the near saint, but they rarely seek their company or listen to their words. Such men are an adornment to the local scene, but they are rarely a force for changing it.

The "son of man" conception is weak for the opposite reason. A minister may become so much a part of the community that he is incapable of rising above it. Of a prominent minister it has been said, "He has every instinct of the American business man." Of another it was said, "He is so busy being his own dear, sweet self that he has no time to bother about the woes of the world." The danger is that a man's voice may merely echo the opinions of those with whom he associates. His ideal for himself may involve little more than being a good fellow. In his efforts to commend himself to everybody he may overdo Paul's excellent suggestion about all thing to all men, and in the process become just another man in the crowd. In the endeavor to make contacts and exert influence he may subconsciously water down his convictions until their cutting edge is utterly lost. His identification with his fellows may become so perfect that no one will suspect him of being a minister. During the war it was said of a chaplain in the air corps, "The only time we knew he was a clergyman was when he prayed over us after we had been briefed for a mission."

* * *

But both of these conceptions have their points of strength.

What is the use of having a minister unless he is different from his fellows? The logic of this is unassailable. Most people prefer that a minister look and act like a man of God. Clerical clothes have many advantages, especially in the city. No officer of the law will serve a ticket on anyone so attired for any of the lesser infractions of the traffic code. The right kind of a collar permits a minister to circulate freely in hospitals. He will be admitted more quickly and freely to apartment houses and homes. Because his calling is obvious, he will be called upon to render service in any emergency which may arise. If he is a big enough man, he can overcome the psychological barriers which men put about his position. He can know life, but it takes effort and skill on his part. It is possible to be both apart from life and a part of life.

* * *

Much can also be said for the minister who conforms to the customs of the community. Every clergyman does this to a greater or less degree. What use can a minister be unless he knows the life of his people intimately? And how can he do this if there are obvious barriers between him and his flock? This is also good logic. Taking clerical garb as a symbol rather than a thing in itself, the minister who does not wear it will

probably hear more profanity and doubtful stories than one who does, but he will also be able to make a more casual and natural approach to most people. My wife once rented a room in our house to a girl without mentioning my calling, and it took her a week to discover my name on the church up on the avenue. Her response was "Why, I have been living here in a perfectly natural way!" Most people want a minister to dress his part, but they also assume an artificial attitude and manner of speech when they see him coming. To many of the clergy this is quite disgusting. Without clerical garb a minister will be received more on a man-to-man basis as a human being rather than as a representative of God and his church. If his primary interest is in people rather than the institutional side of religion, this may be a decided advantage. Although it is difficult, a minister may be able to use his standing as a Rotarian and even his political affiliations to good ends. This takes a strong man. Some ministers, and a few of their wives, have been ruined by cocktails but there are those whose Christian purpose is even proof against alcohol. The pastor who can meet people where they are and then lead them somewhere else may be an asset to the Kingdom of God.

Most ministers feel the tug of conflicting motives. Each desires to be both a man of God and one of the people. They handle this tension in one of three ways.

* * *

The path of least resistance is to accept one of the extreme roles as they are clearly defined and involve the minimum of struggle. The life of a priest follows a set pattern. He does certain prescribed things, and everybody is satisfied. This is also true of the minister who conforms to the social standards of the community. He swims with the tide, and all is well. He need never bark his shins on a conviction. He just goes along. Usually it is the weaker men who are either wholly different from or wholly conformed to the way of life of their people.

Most ministers are in unequal equilibrium between these two ideals. Their lives have both Godward and manward aspects. How these are mixed, and which is dominant depends upon the temperament of the man and the circumstances by which he is surrounded. In the course of his ministry he may be drawn in one direction or the other. Congregations both make ministers and break them. Some want a man of God to whom they can look up; others crave a friendly soul with whom they can pal around. The degree to which a minister yields to these external pressures depends upon his inherent strength.

A few men manage to combine both extremes. This takes strength and much poise. There are men of God who accept the role of a priest but whose perceptions are so keen and whose sympathies are so broad that they penetrate deeply into the lives and hearts of their people. There are also ministers who conform to the standards of the day, at least in externals, but who at the same time rise above such superficialities and lead men to God. There are only a few of either type, but they are exceedingly valuable both to the church and to society.

Most laymen need a keener awareness of the conflict to which their pastors are almost inevitably exposed. They can protect a minister against some of the less desirable demands for conformity, particularly in the matter of strong drink; they can be more tolerant of the nonconformities from local custom which may be necessary if a minister is to nurture his own soul successfully. Above all, they can be more understanding—and this would be both a comfort and help to many pastors.

Summer and Fall 1952 Recommended Reading List of the Associates in Reading and Discussion of the Department of the Ministry, Congregational Christian Churches

Report of the Chairman of the Associates in Reading

The Rev. Richard P. Carter, Reporting

THE sense of frustration that at times overwhelms us all came over me with peculiar force several years ago. It was during World War II at the time of a parade. As I marched along suddenly all of life seemed futile. The mood became difficult to shake off. A torrent of tormenting questions cascaded through my mind. Why were we thousands of miles from home, family, and friends? Why was so much wealth—in manhood and material—being wasted on such an evil process? "To what purpose is this waste?" Why so long an interference with the constructive work, for which we felt a sense of mission? To what end so much destruction? Modern warfare is so involved and extended as to make goals, practically speaking, almost invisible. Only its negative aspects are clear. "Father save me from this hour," I murmured.

The reason for such a mood coming at that particular time remained a perplexing annoyance for several days, defying analysis. Indeed, it was not until I again participated in a parade that the revelation dawned. It was because of a secondary subdued feeling that is, I am convinced, always present with marching men. The exhilaration of stirring music, the pageantry and applauding crowds, the awareness of being part of a multitude never completely take it away. In marching you never see men's faces, you only see their backs. God forgive us for our sins in making marching men necessary. Yet I doubt if they can be called a redemptive factor in society.

Salvation is a face-to-face matter. Life situations can be solved only as we confront God and men in this manner. A round table is the best place to get a square deal. This is as true theologically speaking as it is politically. How better can we prepare to face our congregations than by meeting about a table to discuss the foundations of our faith with fellow-ministers? And during the weeks of relaxation and refreshment this summer plan to face some of the alert minds of the Christian tradition through their writings.

Here is a list of books you might well confront in just this way. Face some of them earnestly; we believe you will face your congregation with deeper conviction and firmer assurance for having done so.

The Associates in Reading are appointed by the Commission on the Ministry to assist you in the formation of discussion groups and in procuring books to conform to your budget. Let us know what we can do to help. Write either the Director of the Department of the Ministry or the Chairman of the Associates.

Summer and Fall 1952 Recommended Reading List of the Associates in Reading and Discussion of the Department of the Ministry, Congregational Christian Churches

PRIMARY LIST

"Theology of the New Testament, Vol. 1," by Rudolph Bultmann. Charles Scribner's Sons, $3.50

The first half of an exhaustive examination of New Testament thought by the author of "Jesus and the Word." Professor Bultmann, whose work is now being hotly debated on the continent, considers the teaching of Jesus as a "presupposition" of Christian theology rather than the content of it, and continues with an exposition of the faith of the apostolic church, paying special attention to the theology of St. Paul. The volume contains detailed studies of key words with which the Christian preacher has to deal. It is widely regarded as a major contribution to the modern understanding of the New Testament.

"The Irony of American History," by Reinhold Niebuhr. Charles Scribner's Sons, $2.50

Dr. Niebuhr believes our civilization is in greater danger from within than from without; from our own frailties than from Communism. Triumph or defeat lie within ourselves. Only by returning to traditional religion can we give meaning to our material social advantages. Human depravity is expressed in our secularism; this is the sadness of history. The section on foreign policy is vigorously provocative of discussion.

The book is penetrating, incisive, discussional, a sensitive theological analysis and diagnosis of American life. Every minister should take it with him on his vacation this summer.

"Guide to the Christian Faith," by William A. Spurrier. Charles Scribner's Sons, $2.50

Excellent for discussion. Basic convictions about one's place in life. His belief about evil, suffering, God, Christ, values, sin and faith. Doctrinal but not "theological." Fine for laymen and young people of college age as it is written in a manner to tease the mind regarding the Christian Doctrines of Revelation, Man, Sin, God, Christ, Resurrection, Atonement, Eternal Life, Salvation.

One will come away from this book with a firm belief in these matters which will result in action.

"The Struggle of the Soul," by Lewis Joseph Sherrill. Macmillan Co., $2.50

By an able, consecrated, and understanding professor of Union Theological Seminary, this book traces the religious development of the soul from infancy to eternity as God is confronted in the struggle of existence. It is good for ministers, parents, teachers who would understand themselves, their students, and their children. The book has depth, perspective, and wisdom—and is permeated by the Christian faith. An excellent book.

"The Travail of Religious Liberty," by Roland H. Bainton. Westminster Press, $4.00

A scholarly readable discourse on the figures of Religious Liberty, in both Protestant and Catholic Churches during the past four centuries. A must for a Christian minister.

SUPPLEMENTARY LIST

"The Life of the Soul," by Samuel H. Miller. Harper & Brothers, $2.00

This beautifully written volume offers to the reader a rich feast for both the mind and spirit. It may serve well as a companion for devotional reading, and again it may serve as an intellectual stimulus for thought on the nature and life of the human soul. Here is a generous and altogether satisfying portion of beauty and wisdom.

"God Makes The Difference," by Edwin McNeill Poteat. Harper & Brothers, $3.00

The Christian answer to naturalistic, scientific, humanistic materialism with depth, insight, skill, and clarity in all the areas of life: the market-place, family, death, redemption, immortality. God makes the difference in all of life. Read it.

"Way to Wisdom," by Karl Jaspers. Yale University Press, $3.00

One of the leading existentialist philosophers of our time here seeks to enlist the general reader in serious, nontechnical thought about the fundamental problems of existence.

"Pillar of Fire," by Karl Stern. Harcourt, $3.50

A deeply moving and perceptive autobiography of a German Jewish psychiatrist now converted to Roman Catholic Christianity. He spent most of the Hitler years in Germany, yet writes about the meaning of those years with rare insight and without bitterness.

"Psychology, Religion and Healing," by Leslie Weatherhead. Abingdon-Cokesbury, $5.00

This book by the famous minister of City Temple, London, is an important and critical study of this important field. The author begins with a discussion of the healing miracles of Christ and includes a discussion of the most important modern methods and techniques. A study of this rich book should greatly increase a minister's competence as a counsellor.

"Modern Poetry and the Christian Tradition," by Amos N. Wilder. Charles Scribner's Sons, $3.00

Although dealing specifically with modern poetry, here is a book which provides a way toward a deeper understanding of the modern situation through the expressions of the literary world in its inevitable revelation of the hungers and dilemmas of contemporary life. The author offers significant help to the minister who would make himself more aware of the crisis of modern culture, and through that awareness bring greater relevance to his message in new forms of apologetics.

"Tradition and the Spirit," by Daniel Jenkins. Faber and Faber, $1.75

The dimension of tradition in which the Church lives and the glorious foundation which it enjoys within the freedom of the Spirit, is the theme of this book. Whether he is dealing with the issues of the ecumenical movement or the perils and privileges of tradition within the local church, the minister will find much insight and inspiration in this examination of the nature of tradition, the richness of heritage, the strength of a "founded freedom."

"A Study in St. Mark," by Austin Farrer. Jacre Press, London, $3.50

A suggestive treatment in brilliant style of the unity of St. Mark's Gospel, based on the number and pattern of the healing miracles. History and symbolism explain the messianic secret. The author presupposes that Mark was an inspired writer convinced of the divine incarnation in Jesus of Nazareth.

"Waiting for God," by Simone Weil. G. P. Putnam's Sons, $3.50

A very moving spiritual autobiography: how a French Jewish agnostic came to Catholic Christianity and the full mystical vision without ever receiving baptism. Miss Weil is the "Saint" of all who stand on the threshold of the Church.

"Biblical Authority for Today," by Alan Richardson & Wolfgang Schweitzer. Westminster Press, $4.00

This symposium is by such scholars as C. H. Jodd, C .T. Craig, G. Florovsky, James Muilenburg, Walter Eichrodt and the editors. It contains "guiding principles for the interpretation of the Bible" and points the way towards understanding the relevance of the Word of God in the Scriptures to the social and economic problems of our times.

THE COMMITTEE OF ASSOCIATES IN READING

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"Buying Books from Britain"

Some Practical Counsel from a Member of the Associates in Reading, Study and Discussion

The Rev. Clifford O. Simpson

Manchester, Connecticut

IN BUYING books from Britain we should consider the price, the stock available, the time necessary for purchasing, the way of payment and the availability of particular books. The price is usually much cheaper than the purchasing of books in America. For example, from Blackwell's in Oxford, I purchased Emil Brunner's "Our Faith" for $1.08. This included postage, air mail and insurance and the complete cost of the book. To purchase the same book in America costs $2.75. In a letter from Blackwell's they state that the price is usually one-third and often more. And as one evidence of their statement they show the cost of the Oxford Classical Dictionary in England which is 3 pounds and 3 shillings. The American price for the same dictionary is 6 pounds and 5 shillings.

James Thin in Edinburgh writes that books are much cheaper and where parallel editions are published in both countries, American editions cost even three and four times the price of the British publication. For instance, John Baillie's "Diary of Private Prayer" cost 5 shillings in Britain (approximately $.70) and $2.50 in the United States. The additional cost of postage is a mere fraction of the savings.

I pay my bill quarterly by an ordinary check through the Bankers' Trust Company at 16 Wall Street, New York City. This is a standard arrangement that Blackwell's in Oxford, England, has arranged. They send me an invoice after each purchase and then quarterly statements. I suppose that similar arrangements can be made with other bookstores.

Of course, one of the major drawbacks is the time involved between the order and the arrival of the book. An air mail letter will bring a book within three to four weeks.

As to the availability of the books, Blackwell writes that the English bookshops are certainly as well stocked as the American bookshop, and Foyles pride themselves on having the most comprehensive stock in the world. James Thin of Edinburgh writes that he has the largest stock of new and second-hand theological and philosophical books in the United Kingdom, and the Independent Press states that they have a very large quantity available and speak about the traditions for scholarship that make many of their scholars' names household words. All of the above named companies publish catalogues and will be glad to send them on request.

I have found these firms very courteous in their correspondence and Blackwell's (the only firm with which I have done much book buying) very cooperative and helpful. They are willing to search for second hand copies or out-of-print books. For example, "The Treasury of David," the seven volumes on the Psalms by Spurgeon arrived at the parsonage over a year after I had asked them to find the collection for me.

May I further recommend the Religious Book Club of the S. C. M. Press, London as a very helpful and reasonable way to get new books. I have been a subscriber for several years. For $4.00 a year in America (1 pound in England) you can be enrolled for a year's subscription. These small books are by sound thinkers, devoted Christians and written ably. On occasion I have had books mailed directly from England before I saw any advertisement about them in the American magazines.

Doubtless there are many other bookstores in England that would be glad to do business with American ministers by mail. I am listing the addresses of four that I have mentioned in the above paragraphs.

B. H. Blackwell, Ltd.
48-51 Broad Street
Oxford

W. & G. Foyle, Ltd.
119-125 Caring Cross Road
London, W.C. 2

Heffer's
Petty Cury
Cambridge

James Thin
University Bookseller
54-55-56 and 59 South Bridge
Edinburgh, Scotland

The Independent Press
Publishing Dept. of the
Congregational Union of
England and Wales
Memorial Hall
Farringdon Street
London, E.C. 4

McCallum
Buchanan Street
Glasgow, Scotland

The Tides of Life

The Rev. Frank Dyer
Santa Monica, California

A GOOD ministry is like the tides of life, it never ends. It carries on from generation to generation. The urge once planted in a receptive human soul comes to new birth in a process forever nurtured by the Divine Gardener.

Of a good minister of Jesus Christ we can say, "Like Ben Adhem — may his tribe increase."

We know not whither our ministries may extend. If across some tide I have never yet crossed, that will not seem too strange to me for the tide that once brought me to life along a lovely shore, can in God's good Providence carry me to a lovelier shore than limited human sight has ever yet beheld.

Not only where, but what of ministries to come. Once it was said, "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister."

It was also said by the great Pilot of our faith and destiny, "Thou hast been faithful over a few things—I will give you much more to do."

One feels stunned, but then thrilled by the generosity of such a promise. You see there still will be millions borne over by that inevitable tide which no man escapes. Humility rather forbids one offering to be a candidate for any position on that celestial shore—but if I dared to do so I would like to be assigned to meet the newcomers to bring them into the family. St. Peter I am sure can't take care of everybody.

One thing is doubly sure—if one life has been good—you want another. If

there was a fire in your bones that impelled you to action, you cannot contemplate idleness with satisfaction. My mind declines to do so. When the limitations upon our present co-operation are over, the society of freed personalities can be contemplated with endless fascination. I like a free translation of the word on Peter's future: When you were young, you girded yourself and went wherever you wanted to go, but when you are mature, God shall gird you and translate you for further service.

A Consecration Prayer for Church School Teachers

God of light, who dost bid us shine in darkness, and on a stand, to bring light to all in Thy household, consecrate us as light-bearers to Thy little ones. Create in us concern for them as for candles yet unlighted, lest their small wicks, ready for the spark from Heaven by which they shall light the world's darknesses, catch instead the fires of Hell and destroy us. Amen.

A Prayer for an Anniversary

O Eternal Father, to whom a thousand years are but as a watch in the night; guide Thy seeking, hopeful people: lest pride in achievement replace our sense of opportunity. Help us to know how valuable are the lives and thoughts of those who have given themselves without stint for the more abundant life for all. But keep before us always a humbling knowledge that our complicated imperfections fall far short of Thy perfection. Strengthen us through the faith that upholds our minds, through the fellowship that lifts our hearts, and keep us seeking and praying ever for Thy Kingdom to come through Christ. Amen.

The Rev. L. Donald Bond
Mankato, Minnesota

An Anniversary Hymn

Thy people stand to bless Thy name today,
Through all the years Thy love hath blest our way;
Here in Thy house our hearts and voices sing,
As unto Thee our gratitude we bring.

We thank Thee, Lord, for loyal hearts and true,
For all who served and sought Thy work to do,
For souls of faith, of courage strong and bold,
Who loved Thy Church as did Thy saints of old.

Thy Spirit rest upon us now, we pray,
Strengthen our hands to serve Thee as we may;
Grant to our hearts true love of God and men,
Until the Christ shall win the earth to Him.

We pledge to Thee our love and loyalty,
Under Thy banner we would faithful be;
Lead Thou us on, O Christ, our King divine,
And praise and glory be forever Thine. Amen.

The Rev. Francis C. Ellis

Tune:
"God of our Fathers"

"Lord, To Whom Shall We Go?"

The Rev. Richard W. Ingle
McCook, Nebraska

ONE of the most gripping scenes in the ministry of Jesus is related in the Gospel of John. The Master's popular ministry in Galilee was experiencing failure. The multitudes, which had thronged to listen to his preaching and to witness his healings, had deserted him. Seeking to find in Jesus a popular Messiah and wonder-worker, he had dashed their expectations with his strange interpretations of the Kingdom of God. In the midst of this rejection, John tells us that Jesus turned to the disciples and asked, "Will you also go away?" And Simon Peter answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we have believed and come to know, that thou art the Holy One of God."

One can well imagine the consternation in the hearts of the disciples. In the very fact that the first part of Peter's reply is a question, attests to the dismay of the disciples. They had given up much to follow Jesus. But more important still, they had experienced a complete re-orientation within their lives—their out-look on life. How could a man be the same after living at the side of the Master for so many days? To Jesus' question, of course, their answer would be, "To whom shall we go?" They had staked their lives and fortunes on the Galilean, and couldn't see beyond that point.

I

Now this is more than an interesting situation. Today we find ourselves in much the same situation as the disciples. We look about us and find human relationships in glaring contradiction to everything the Master revealed and exemplified. We find Jesus rejected by millions who have accepted the gross materialism of Communism. We find Christ rejected in the hatred, prejudice and suspicion which plague human relationships.

Surely we have discovered that it is one thing to be a Christian in times of relative peace; and it is something else to be a Christian in days such as these. In times of peace, when there is a certain spirit of community at work in the world, the precepts of Jesus fit quite well into the pattern of things—the Christian message has ground in which it can take root. But in strife-ridden times Christian living takes on an entirely different complexion—the shadow of the Cross becomes a very present reality. To hold fast to values that are flagrantly denied, to still hope when there is so much despair, to still retain a vision of the brotherhood of man when life reveals anything but brotherhood, mean but one thing, the Cross of the spirit.

So this is the position we find ourselves in today, and such a position gives rise to many disturbing questions—questions I'm sure the disciples were asking themselves when Jesus asked, "Will you also go away?" What are those questions? I believe that they go something like this: Could Jesus have been wrong? Is love the supreme power at work in life which no force can destroy? Are we kidding ourselves when we think, talk and strive to live in terms of love, forgiveness and forbearance? Could it be possible that the Master's message is out of date, outmoded by a modern, complex technilogical society such as

ours? Could those persons be closer to the truth when they declare that "might makes right"?

After reflecting on history and our so-called practical world, one is almost tempted at times to declare that Jesus was wrong; "might makes right"; there is no such thing as brotherhood; love is weak and hatred is strong. One is almost tempted to throw to the winds our Christian ideals and prayerful hopes. Why talk and sing and pray about "peace, wonderful peace" when there is no peace. Yes, this is another kind of temptation which all of us have experienced whether we consciously admit it or not. But after we have drunk deeply of the bitter dregs of despair, there arises the most disurbing question, "Lord, to whom shall we go?"; and that is a sobering question. Commit Christ to the ash heap, throw our Christian values and ideals to the winds, let the dignity of man go to the dogs; and then where are we? how are we? why are we? "Lord, to whom shall we go?"

II

There is one certainty in this whole matter and it is this—we must go somewhere, hold fast to something, believe in some ideal and live under some conviction. Say what you will about life—to live is to choose from alternatives and follow through a course of action. Without decision and the power to act on decision life is pointless, it has no purpose, no meaning, it ends in tragedy. Psychologists point out that indecision is an invitation to disaster. The man or woman who can not make up his or her mind on essential values, ideals and purposes in life is the person courting a nervous breakdown. Life will not tolerate moral and spiritual "fence-straddling." What better classic example could be given of this characteristic of life than Hamlet? Torn by conflicting ideals we find him moving from situation to situation with agonizing indecision, until we find him even uncertain over the question of whether "to be or not to be." What could the destiny of such a person be other than tragedy? And so is it with us today, living in uncertain times. If the uncertainty of the times is mirrored by uncertainty within our souls, then we do court disaster. Here is Christ, whose name we bear, after nineteen centuries still looming before us in spite of the world's darkness. There can be little mistake what he stands for, his life and message are crystal clear. If we reject him, to whom shall we go? We must go somewhere.

Jesus came to reveal God unto us, and he revealed God's will for our lives in terms of compassionate love, forgiveness and neighborliness. How hard it is to hold fast to these ideals today in the face of the totalitarian state, where little quarter is given. But can you visualize life without these ideals? How could our homes exist without love and forgiveness? How could our communities exist without the Christian values of neighborliness and mutual helpfulness? How could our democracy exist without the Christian belief that there is enough dignity and goodness within man which makes it possible for him to assume the responsibilities of government? Admittedly, today the Christian virtues often seem out of place, and even inadequate to meet the desperate needs of a world such as this. But as weak and as out of place as they sometimes appear, they are the very life blood of our democratic way of life. Dissect the spirit of Christ from our lives, our homes, our communities; and democracy as we know it at its best would cease to exist.

III

Where can we go from the love of God which was revealed in Christ? Where can we go, if we throw aside our faith in God and His lordship over life? History gives us an impressive commentary of where men and nations have gone who have rejected Christ. The pathways which lead away from Christ have led to

the police state of Fascist Italy, the human breeding farms of Nazi Germany, the slave-labor camps of Communist Russia. The pathways from Christ have led to the broken home, the neglected child, the jaded personality sunk in depravity and despair. The pathway from Christ always seems to be a one-way street to the devil.

Is it difficult to understand why life spells either "Christ or Chaos"? Christ was the highest embodiment of love that the world has ever witnessed. His life was a living illustration of what it means to truly love. Through his life we have learned what redemptive and creative power there is to be in love. Surely all of us realize that without love there can be no marriage, home, nor community in any true sense of the word; because to love is to live. When love toward God and man dies, the human spirit dies and becomes a victim of hatred, suspicion and the lust for power. The curse of our world today is not too much hate, but too little love. What I am trying to say is simply this—Jesus' message is life; the alternatives are moral, spiritual and even physical death.

Perhaps this sounds like a negative approach to Christian commitment—holding fast to our Christian Faith, because life offers no other adequate alternative. Still I believe that these are times which call for straight thinking and "counting the costs." All of us need to arrive at a deeper understanding and appreciation of the saving truth of the Man of Galilee. What better question can we ask today, "Lord, To Whom Shall We Go?"

The Prophet

Mr. Robert Waugh
Berlin, New Hampshire

(A Meditation after listening to a lecture on the Old Testament by Dr. James Muilenberg)

THERE strode in before us a tall, spare man, slightly bowed from intensity of purpose. He looked into us. A fierce kindliness blazed from his keen, questing eyes. High intelligence shone from the man. We felt a Presence. He opened his mouth and spoke with profound comprehension clear words of life. Words, living words sprang from his mouth. This God-intoxicated man took me with him. We stepped out of time. We walked in an ancient, arid land. We saw a shepherd clothed in an aged garment, and asked him for Tekoa.

"Tekoa? Over there," came the answer in a tongue I had never heard; yet I understood.

Tekoa, and a few ragged shepherds to greet us. They offered us water from an ancient, filthy skin. 'Twas an act of supreme courtesy. We understood. We gulped a little of the horrid stuff and offered *our* gift of canned goods.

We went back, back, back to Bethel. We passed villages of little, one-room houses clinging to the hillsides, with grain fields below, vineyards and olive groves above, and, up against the sky, the high places. Ah! Those high places where the baals twisted and corrupted the message of Yahweh, the one God! How deep were their roots in the fears and lusts of the people!

Bethel. We saw faces, crowds of faces. Harried faces, bewildered faces, resentful faces, cruel faces, pleading faces, lecherous faces—vacant, bovine,

soulless faces. And—yes, uplifted, hopeful faces. A serene face. A saintly face.

The prophet stood up to speak. A fierce kindliness blazed from his keen, questing eyes. High intelligence shone from the man. He spoke with profound comprehension. I felt a Presence. This God-intoxicated man spoke to the people. Words, living words, sprang from his mouth; words of accusation and warning. "Thus saith the Lord, 'I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins. I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem. I will *punish* you for all your iniquities. Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.' "

* * *

And from the prophet's mouth there flew words of assurance and hope.

"Seek the Lord and ye shall live. Seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning.

Seek good and not evil, that ye may live.

Hate the evil and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate.

Let justice run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream."

And Amos was driven back to Tekoa.

Today I walked down Main St. I saw faces—harried faces, bewildered faces, resentful faces, cruel faces, pleading faces, lecherous faces—vacant, bovine, soulless face. And, yes—uplifted, hopeful faces. I saw a serene face and a saintly face.

I felt a Presence, and words came to my lips. "Thus saith the Lord, I will punish you for all your iniquities. Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live. Hate the evil and love the good. Let justice run down . . ."

But you're smiling. Why are you smiling? YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! But it's the truth. I *was* there. I *did* see him. I *did* hear him. I . . . heard . . . the Word. I walked with Amos . . . and Muilenberg.

The New Reformation

The Rev. Samuel M. Le Page
Stockton, Kansas

A NEW reformation has been going on quietly, in our Protestant churches. In fact it has been so quiet that a great number of people are not aware of the fact that it is taking place. None the less, all over the land, our churches have been quietly removing the old fashioned pulpit and have put in its place a chancel with altar, lectern and pulpit.

After the Protestant revolt, there was a tendency to shy away from all that belonged to the old church. So the word of God and the pulpit from which it was proclaimed was given the place of honor in the church service. The sacraments were made secondary for the Word itself was a sacrament which had the power to transform men. So the communion table was made to take a humble place underneath the pulpit and the Lord's Supper became an occasional service given at the close of the preaching of the Word. This naturally gave the minister the center of attention. And this in turn sometimes made him opinionated and gave him a false sense of dignity.

In more recent years, however, there has been a trend away from the old order. The tendency is to place the emphasis on worship more than on the hearing of the Word. This tendency has been

due to two or three different causes. First, the general level of intelligence has been raised so that the minister no longer appears as the oracle that he was once thought to be. Then again the minister himself is in part to blame for the transformation. In order that he might appear as a man among men, he left off his ecclesiastical garb. Thus he lowered his dignity and left the laity free to think of him as just another professional of an order not much higher than that of the Superintendant of Schools. But there was still a feeling that the Church had a vital function to perform, so the emphasis has been shifting over to the altar and the worship service of which it is the center.

Since this change has come gradually and without any fanfare there has been little time to evaluate the meaning of the change and make preparation for the different type of service necessitated. Now there is an altar with cross and candles, a lectern and a pulpit, how shall they be used? We are not in the position of the broad church people of the Protestant Episcopal group that has a tradition to fall back on. We are left to grope our way, picking up an idea here and there and applying them as the occasion seems to demand. Naturally there is a great deal of confusion and some ministers scarcely know the difference between the lectern and the pulpit. Some have even been known to appear before the altar in a sack suit wearing a bright red tie and tan shoes.

I

It would seem, therefore, that there ought to be a few simple rules to guide those who have not been brought up in the traditions of a formal worship service. The chancel in a general way corresponds to that part of the Jewish temple which was called the Holy of Holies. It is that area of the church which is consecrated to God in a special way and is, therefore, to be treated with reverence and respect. It is not a platform where an orchestra may be seated on special occasions with a director waving his baton. It is not a platform for a moving picture screen or for the Children's Day Program. There is a cross and candles. The cross represents our crucified Lord whom we worship, and the lighted candles typify the Holy Spirit who is present to guide the congregation in its worship. The lighting of the candles, therefore, signifies that God is present in a special way and that the worship service has begun.

The chancel calls for vestments and a little more of the ceremonial than we had with the old fashioned pulpit. In the old days the minister was a law unto himself. He was inclined, however, to maintain his dignity by wearing a Prince Albert or an English walking coat. Now he is to appear more as a priest before the altar and not as an ordinary worshipper making his confession before God. This means that there should be a special garb and there is nothing more appropriate than a robe of some description. It may be with a stole or any other accessories the minister wishes, but certainly there should be some special garb for the man who approaches God's altar and ministers in things divine. Even Moses took off his shoes when he was in the presence of Jehovah.

The lighting of the candles calls for robes or cotters. The choir also should be in robes and take their place in an orderly procession. It should be remembered that the choir is singing unto the Lord and not for the entertainment of the congregation. Whether it is divided or on one side of the chancel it should face towards the altar. And it detracts from the dignity of the service to have a director standing on the edge of the chancel waving his arms in an effort to keep the singers up to time. The music at all times should be both dignified and worshipful. Not many of the modern revival tunes will be found suitable. The new order ought, however, to inspire the choir director and the minister to look

up and revive some of the old chants and responses, for the ancients undoubtedly had a mind for the fitness of things which we lack.

II

The minister conducts the service from the lectern which of old was on the left side of the altar or on the right of the congregation. The theory was that the word comes from God's right hand. After the responses, the Bible reading and prayer, there comes the offering. The offertory prayer may be before or after the reception of the same. If the idea is that the blessing of God is to be especially on the giver of the gift, then it may well be before. If on the other hand the idea is that it is a sacrifice to the God who gave it to the worshipper, then the gifts are elevated before the altar and the divine blessing invoked. After the offering is a good time for the minister to shift his position from the lectern to the pulpit side of the altar. This avoids any embarrassment in crossing before the altar. And the pulpit still has its place in the church service. The mind of the congregation is to be directed in right paths, and men and women are still to be inspired to greater efforts in the service of the Lord. The new order should never detract from the need men have of the word of God, but always serve as a supplement in preparing an atmosphere for its reception.

There are a few simple rules regarding colors that ought to be kept in mind. The altar cloth, the flowers and the Bible marker ought to be in colors matching the season or the church calendar year. There are five primary colors which by long usage have found a place in the church service and are appropriate for the various occasions. These are white, black, maroon, green and violet. White is the sign of purity and rejoicing and is to be used on Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving, Trinity and Communion Sundays. Black as the sign of mourning and of deep emotions is the color for Good Friday and the funeral service. Purple or violet is for Advent and Prelent. Summer after Trinity Sunday and post Christmas is the time for green. Maroon is for passion tide and Pentecost. The flowers on the altar should harmonize, except that when the altar cloth and the Bible marker is white, then white flowers alone are to be used. In arranging the flowers on the altar they never should extend above the arms of the cross.

These are a few suggestions for the guidance of the minister and the congregation who find themselves possessed of a chancel given as a memorial to some departed brother or sister. They are not exhaustive nor are they the final word as to what the modern worship service should be. For those who would be a bit more formal it would be wise to make a study of ancient liturgy, beginning with the forms used in the high Anglican Church, and going back as far as the time of the Gregorian chants.

We now have the minister and the choir in their robes, the acolytes for the lighting of the candles and a bit of liturgy, let us, therefore, worship and bow down before the Lord our maker. It is indeed a solemn obligation resting on the minister, with God out there in the congregation—this guiding of the people in worship. For the Sunday service is not only to call the mind of the worshippers away from the cares and the disappointments of the week, but it should also enable them to say with Isaiah in the Temple, "I saw the Lord." When this purpose is accomplished the congregation can depart quietly with the words of the Psalmist ringing in their ears; "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go up to the house of the Lord."

Report of the Commission on the Ministry at Claremont, California

The Rev. Fred S. Buschmeyer

THERE were three principal ways in which the Commission on the Ministry expressed its concern at the meeting of the General Council in Claremont. The first was through the printed and oral reports of the Chairman of the Commission, Dr. James F. English. These were so important that they are printed in full in this article.

The second was the series of three seminar meetings in which from 75 to 100 ministers participated actively in a discussion of current programs and interests of the Department of the Ministry. One session was spent on the latest revision of the Proposed Handbook For The Ministry. The second session was spent on a seminar discussion of the Proposed Handbook for those working in the field of Christian Education. In the third session, Dr. Frank Scribner spoke and lead a discussion on the possibilities of Congregational Christian ministers participating in the Federal Social Security plan; and the Rev. Horace Robson, Executive Secretary of the Board of Pastoral Supply in Boston, Massachusetts, reported on the work of the Board and its cooperation with conference superintendents, ministers, and the officers of local churches.

The third activity of the Commission on the Ministry consisted of playing the host to the members of the Chaplains' Fellowship who were present at the Council. These included 8 chaplains on active duty and 25 of our ministers who served as chaplains in World War II.

The reports presented to the members of the Council by Dr. English as Chairman of the Commission on the Ministry were as follows:

"Your Commission on the Ministry reports that it has sought to serve the interests of our Fellowship and of the entire Cause by developing the functions and services of the Department of the Ministry. Since July 1, 1944, when the Department was established, it has been our purpose to discover and list the needs in this field and to come to a clearer understanding of the best methods by which to meet them. We have sought to discover first the current practices in regard to the ministry throughout our churches in order that we might find the common grounds of usage and procedure. We are deeply grateful to all who have responded to our inquiries and for the information which they have so willingly supplied.

We find that there is need for careful thought concerning a satisfactory theory and doctrine of the ministry in our fellowship and in our generation. We need to understand more clearly than we do just what a minister in this day is, how he comes to this estate and what is his place in our churches and our society.

Recognizing the essential truth of our freedom in Christ and of our responsibility first and always to Him we work and pray both for the increase of the ministry and also for the strengthening of it.

To those ends we are preparing tenta-

tive suggestions for a Handbook of Principles, Organization and Procedure for the Department and of Recommendation for Conference Committees on the Ministry. Already we have made four drafts of this handbook. The work has been revealing and rewarding, promising to be of great assistance to all who are concerned with the problems which we face. These studies are now in form for presentation and study in one of our seminar sessions.

As we have been doing this we have been requested by the company of those who are devoting their time and talents to the field of Christian Education to undertake a similar service in their behalf. This is being done cooperatively and again the results of the studies and labors will be presented in another seminar session. Thus we are recognizing the ancient designation of our ministers as Pastors and Teachers and furthermore we are discovering that in all truth those serving in this related field are one with all in the service of the Gospel.

We have sought to come to grips with the problem of adequate instruction in the history, polity and present practices of our Congregational Christian Churches both for our younger ministers and also for those coming to us from other fellowships. The subcommittee on these courses has made a study of the instruction being given and has prepared an outline under the following heads:

I. Origin and History of Congregationalism
II. Record of Faith Within the Congregational Way
III. Congregational Christian Polity as among other Church Polities
IV. Congregational Christian Faith and Polity at Work
V. The Minister's Task, Opportunity and Requirements.

This we hope will be tested and corrected in the classrooms of the schools which train our ministers.

In this connection we are endeavoring to insist upon the principle of the Headship of Christ in all that we undertake. We are seeking a full measure of mutual understanding with a will to demonstrate what can and must be accomplished without external authority, but always in response to the leadership of our Lord and Master.

We are anxious to make clear to our ministers just what our polity and practices are today. To that end we have prepared "Understanding Ourselves" which is a brief historical outline and an accompanying chart to indicate our high commission and our practical relationships. This is included herewith, and may we report that it has met with grateful and enthusiastic response among our seminarians throughout the country.

We are happy to add that *The Minister's Quarterly* has been continued under the editorship of Dr. Gaius Glenn Atkins with splendid results and universal appreciation. The Associates in Religious Reading, Study and Discussion and the Western Seminar on Ministerial Studies have continued their service with groups working on the study and recommendation of books both in the east and the west.

Our Director, Dr. Buschmeyer has been indefatigable in his labors to serve the ministers of the entire fellowship. His report as Associate Minister and Secretary of the General Council reveals not only a vast amount of service performed but also the wisdom of the Council in creating such an office and in appointing him to it.

Again we affirm our belief that the moral, spiritual and intellectual quality of our ministry is the most determinative single factor in the life and well-being of our churches. To the end that the high traditions and ideals of the Pilgrims and the Puritans in this regard may be sustained and increased we plead for your continued interest and support."

The Oral Report of Chairman of the Commission on the Ministry

Much has been said about the need for new churches, and we have unanimously and enthusiastically voted to raise a vast sum for their building. The Department of the Ministry would respectfully call attention to the fact that at this moment we do not have a sufficient number of adequately trained ministers to serve even our present churches. Obviously if the new churches which we shall build are to fulfill our dreams, we must have still more adequately trained ministers.

The Department of the Ministry urges all ministers, leaders in religious education and youth work, and lay people of our Congregational Christian fellowship, to accept their share of the responsibility for the recruiting of the ministry of our churches. The Department will be glad to place in your hands the printed materials helpful and necessary to explain the opportunities and requirements of our various forms of church vocations. The time is coming, in fact, is already here, when we must face up to the need of more adequate scholarship provision for our students preparing for ministerial service. If time permitted, we would like to make a dramatic presentation of the methods of dealing with this and every other concern of the Departmnet of the Ministry. Since this cannot be, let me state as briefly as possible certain facts covering our concern and our ways and plans for meeting them.

We are deeply concerned that Conference and Association Committees on the Ministry shall comprehend their great responsibilities and perform their important tasks effectively. These range all the way from the enlisting of young men to adequate provision for honorable retirement.

The Department is vitally concerned with the education, training and constant growth of our ministers. To that end we seek to cooperate with our excellent seminaries, the Board of Home Missions in its program of summer schools for pastors, State Conferences in their convocations and retreats, the Associates in Reading and Discussion and the Western Seminar in Ministerial Studies.

That we may have and maintain adequate standards, follow regular procedures and be supplied with suitable forms and services in this field, we are preparing a Handbook to which reference is made in the report. Already this service of our Department has revealed, through extensive correspondence and the group meetings held here at Claremont, that this holds great promise and is deeply appreciated.

With regard to our concern for placement and counsel, we are certain that few persons realize that in the Congregational Christian church order we do have a program of placement. Since 1946 when action of the General Council was taken in regard to this matter, there has been increased cooperation between the Conferences and the regional agencies for pastoral settlement and supply with good effect. It is our hope that this trend of service will be continued and extended in the next few years.

The Department of the Ministry stands ready to consult with all church and Conference offices about the growing importance of adequate standards of financial remuneration and retirement for the ministers of our fellowship. We believe that it would be revealing for every church to realize from careful study that the salaries of the average Congregational Christian minister has not advanced in the last ten years in proportion to the national wage and salary income, the cost of living index, our own home church expense, or even our denominational benevolences. We seek

no special privilege in the matter of remuneration for our ministers, but we would remind you that the laborer is worthy of his hire.

We fervently hope that all churches in our fellowship will make it a matter of conscience to cooperate fully in every means available for the provision of adequate retirement and security for our ministers.

Let us remind you that there have gone forth from our homes and churches a total number of 115 ministers, who, as chaplains in the Armed Forces, are serving the spiritual needs of our young people. Again, if time permitted we are sure that you would be delightfully surprised to hear the full story of the effective service rendered by these men, in many instances at great personal sacrifice on their part and on the part of their families. Furthermore it can be noted that their ministries are far more extensive with relation to personal counselling, Christian education of children and youth, parish and community service than in many of our home parishes.

Added to these there are several hundreds of our ministers rendering distinctive leadership in educational institutions and through chaplaincies in hospitals, prisons and various welfare organizations. All of these are members of our family of ministers.

As we look forward, we are enheartened by the fact that in the year 1951, more young men and women were ordained to our ministry than in any year since 1903. Furthermore the number of those "In Care of Association" and "In Course" in seminaries is showing a steady increase across the last few years. We face the future with hope, in the faith that in our homes, our churches and throughout our fellowship there are those who care and who will earnestly work that our churches may have an adequate ministry.

Concerning Satyagraha

The Editor

IT is two years since Harper & Bros. published Louis Fischer's massive and exhaustive life of Mahatma Ghandi. It is not an easy book quickly to read. There are 540 pages of it beside the index. It is almost excessively detailed, dated and rich in factual content. Pages of conversation are reported verbatim. It is full of many syllabled Indian names as hard to pronounce as they are to spell. An adequate review of it would tax specialists in half a dozen fields without probable, or even possible, agreement except that the author has done a most demanding task most adequately and that the sheer drama of Ghandi's life has been almost unmatched in history. He lived with "untouchables" to whom he eventually opened the doors of Hindu temples, and came and went almost as he pleased with Premiers, Viceroys and other occupants of the seats of the mighty. He bore himself humbly and was worshipped as a God. He possessed no weapons and influenced the policies of Empires. He spent long seasons in jail and was the freest man in the world.

The almost predestined course of his life, after his education at Oxford, led him to South Africa where he took over as his own personal burden the bitter estate of the East Indians and negroes most unjustly entangled in the racial prejudices and partisanships of the time and the region. Those for whom he spoke then and thereafter were the forgotten,

he seemingly helpless, poor beyond belief, the victims of pride and power and greed for gain who possessed only one weapon, the latent power to wear down, by their own endurances and sufferings, their oppressors. Thereafter Ghandi spent his whole life evoking and mobilizing that latent power against cast, empire, oppression, prejudices, hatreds and intolerances in the tangled jungle of traditional India; without him whole chapters of history would have to be rewritten and no one would know how.

He discovered his method by disposition and necessity in South Africa and thereafter followed it consistently, never counting the cost to himself. He found a name (it was suggested by a cousin) for "this new kind of mass—yet individual opposition to governmental unfairness." The first suggestion was "Sadagrapha," "firmness in a good cause." Ghandi amended it to Satyagraha—"truth force or love force." It is an attribute of the soul. It suffers but does not inflict suffering. It seeks mutual understanding with endless patience. It knows that violence evokes violence and accomplishes nothing. Its end is the ultimate reconciliation of contestants. Ghandi won for the time being a considerable victory in South Africa and the conditions of those whom he represented were much improved. He met, as always, unbelievable stupidities and opposition but the forces which he released belonged to a dimension which violence really could not reach.

Ghandi took himself and his passions for human betterment, his unbounded capacity for love and a strange practical clarity of vision to India. Thereafter, for more than 40 years, Ghandi lived, wrote, spoke, suffered and died for Satyagraha. His inner light was his supreme authority, but he drew illumination from manifold sources. There was never a more catholic and open spirit. He found spiritual illumination, mental guidance and devotional enrichment in the devotional literatures of India and the New Testament. Those who came to know him best recognized in him a Christian whom Jesus would gladly have welcomed. He found that if he did not know it already, that his pattern was the pattern of Christian love and the Sermon on the Mount and that Satyagraha and agape are one and the same thing. His excessive tenderness for every form of life and his unwillingness to destroy even the simplest form of life were his Buddhistic inheritances, and I suppose to a certain extent back of it all there might have been the Hindu belief in transmigration though that does not come out in the literature.

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It is not too much to say that Ghandi became, in widely recognized ways, one of the most consistent advocates of the power of sacrificial good will to wear down defeat and transform power politics and all their stupid and violent consequences in human history.

Many forces conspired to support him; for one thing the immemorial temper of India. Those whom he led had nothing of their own to lose save their poor and pitiful lives and they believed that he walked in the dust with them as an incarnation of Deity. For all this he disciplined himself with a discipline which became for him freedom and happiness. There is an old belief that the individual soul in its descent from the Universal-Soul is wrapped in veil after veil of pride and quest for power and sense desire, greed for possession and hunger for renown. One by one Ghandi freed himself from these wrappings. He was an ascetic, yet with nothing at all of the strange boasting which goes with dramatic self-denial. In the end he lived a continent life, established communities of the like minded, reduced his food consumption to a minimum, made fasting not a penance but a power and as he grew weaker and weaker through self-inflicted fasting, his power became something with which the rulers

of empires had to reckon. In a strange way Ghandi and his causes became invulnerable. They belonged to a dimension which those who opposed him could neither understand nor reach. Imprisonment lost its power when multitudes sought only to be imprisoned. Beatings became futile when those who came to be beaten multiplied and multiplied. All this Fischer develops in great length. His sympathy with Ghandi is beyond question: whether he was fair to the case which England could have made out and did make out for occupation of India is another question.

Ghandi made mistakes. His relations to his own children were not altogether happy. He was consistent only in the deeper courses of his conduct. A pacifist of pacifists he nevertheless supported the British Empire in the First and Second World Wars and from first to last, allowing everything for the wonder of what he did, he was caught in entanglements from which he could not wholly escape. The end of his life was saddened by the fact that a breach beyond bridging between the Moslem and the Hindu divided the India which he had sought so long and at such cost to free, but humanity lowered its flag over the byre of fragrant wood upon which the little which was left of his body was burned. It was as though for a little our beleagured world had seen a light in the darkness and heard a sovereign voice above its storms.

* * *

Reading the life of Ghandi in a world whose newspaper headlines morning after morning are the records of world-wide violence, is an arresting experience. Each reader must draw his own conclusions. One of Fischer's most suggested chapters is his comparison of Ghandi and Winston Churchill. They were the incarnations of two entirely different and irreconcilable systems of power and administration. They were both citizens of two worlds. Churchill lived and lives still in England's Victorian empire, a dead world though he did not know it. Ghandi lived in his vision, his wisdom, his unquenchable hope and his boundless love in a world as yet apparently powerless to be born. The conclusion, this writer believes no reader of the life of Ghandi can escape, is that violence is always the stupidist way out and ends by being no way out at all but only deeper in. One cannot close this book without feeling that the future must belong to the spirit which reconciles, that there is a power in sacrificial suffering which in the long last is irresistible and that only gentleness can make a civilization great. The shadow of the Cross lay across the roads which Ghandi used and instead of shadowing them made them bright. We know that the supreme task of our entangled humanity is to secure right human relationships, and of all the tasks which we have confronted, we have made that the most difficult while now and then, though not too often, someone lives or maybe dies to teach us how simple it might be and how near the unattainable really is.

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There are some lines of George McDonald's from "Back of the North Wind" whose limpid simplicities carry a weight of wisdom (poets are often like that)

"Where did you come from, Baby dear?
Out of the everything into the here."

Tennyson said very much the same thing of his own son, though with a touch less lyric. These are questions of spacious applicability. They may be asked about anything from the snowflakes which are drifting before the March wind as this is being written, to the cloud veiled void out of which they come. The answers are as innumerable as the occasions which evoke the questions though they all have this in common, the sources out of which they issue are always more spacious in range and potentiality than their final focusing in a child, a song, a snowflake, or a sermon.

I do not know that preachers commonly ask specifically of their homiletic offspring "Where did you come from, sermon dear?" though I suppose we preachers have all wondered a little, being occasionally surprised ourselves at what we have written or said—a surprise quite as often shared by the congregation. And George McDonald's answer is not so alien to homiletics as one might suppose, "out of the everywhere into the here." A preacher's "everywhere" has its containing frontiers, though they are by no means easy to trace. There are books enough of what a preacher can do or ought to do to preach, and sermons do fall into general categories, doctrinal, ethical, historical, auditory, evangelical or in general to quote St. Paul "For the edification of the Saints."

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But all this is relatively in the foreground for, though there are pretty clearly recognized patterns for each category of preaching, no two preachers ever follow them in the same way, nor with changing years and experience does a preacher ever duplicate them in the sequences of his own sermons. The "everywhere" out of which sermons come are more spacious than a watershed, to use a just analogy, of any other vocation. The lawyer has his corpus of the law which is spacious enough, but one could make a map of it. The physician has his materia medica and though its medical and surgical relations are a most impressive and curiously named family, it is also possible to make a kind of map even of them.

But try to draw a map of the possible sources of a sermon! The courses offered in representative theological seminaries catalogs will help. But no sermon is ever quite conformed to any of the classic's theological discipline, though their curious and now for the most part discarded names combine to make all this reasonably precise. Compare, for example, the library of a lawyer and a preacher. His library like the lawyer's has a central content relating to his vocation, though it is not likely to be so weighty nor to be bound in calf and, possibly, to be so dusty. But a preacher's library extends into general literature and he can never clearly say when his theology ends and his indebtedness to great literature begins. His invention, to use the rhetorician's term, has so much to choose what controls his choice.

* * *

Certainly there are controls of situations, relationship, vague enough terms but manageable. The intellect, Coleridge said in substance, is not called into action "by storing the passive mind with the various sorts of knowledge most in request as if the human soul was a mere repository for banqueting room. But by placing it in such relation to circumstance as should presently excite its vegetative and emotional powers to produce new fruits of thought, new conceptions, imaginations and ideas"; which is about what every preacher wants to do and his powers of preaching depends upon how well he does it. Any specific sermon grows out of some specific relation to circumstance, at least it should, though very often its relation to any specific circumstance is hard to discover, as when Pepys said of a sermon on original sin that he could not understand why the preacher preached it and doubted whether the preacher knew what he was talking about, though Pepys, himself, had a considerable acquaintance with original sin and very likely was more occupied in looking at a handsome woman than in listening to the sermon. At any rate these relations are not always easy to fix and name. There are religious and theological heredities so potent and so deeply interfused that they seem part of the nature of things. They clutter

his dispositions as though in the end he could say "I do not see how I could be other than I am."

* * *

Very likely most preachers would locate their ruling ideas by their theological positions, but they go far beyond theology. They annex great concerns of life and society and seek to subdue them to faith and conduct or else they carry them, being much changed in the process, into new fields. A reasonably careful study of the message content of any outstanding preacher discloses both his freedom and his limitations, but his message is usually inclusively consistent from first to last. There is no need here nor any possibility of relating his ruling idea to his temper, his time, his parish and the people in his pews. One can only say that, if one could only see them, there is a web of association lines binding preachers and congregations together—the sequences and complexities of life and occasions. His inventiveness, to quote Coleridge again, is the exercise of his mind and spirit to produce new fruits of thought, new conceptions and imaginations and ideas, given a situation to evoke them.

There must always be association lines naturally, but association lines are strangely elusive and do not like to be forced. They love to take us by surprise and when they take a preacher by surprise, they will commonly also take a congregation by surprise and have a free and creative power. This editor believes that if preachers would approach their Bibles with a certain hospitality to free association lines, they would be surprised at the suggestions which are latent in almost any passage. All this sets a preacher free from the accumulation of dusty material, turns reading into a bright and flowing stream carrying with it a happy wealth of usable material.

When the need arises, what is sought is there waiting and eager to be used. As Webster said that, in his reply to Hayne, he needed only to reach for a thunderbolt out of the sky. It was there because for a generation the actions of his reflective and emotional mind had been storing it up. Sermons thus matured grow slowly but come to possess arresting power. The Bible is full of texts which almost literally supply their own topics and, when out of such vegetative processes of the mind, a text has found a sermon and supplied a topic the homiletic stars sing together for joy that they are made.

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The editorials for the August issue of this Quarterly for three or four years now has been written in sight of the sea across the marshes and in a region whose winding and shaded roads are memory and history. The results has been a considerable repetition and a provincial quality which needs correction. If editorials are to be ecumenical, they should reflect new observations and associations, but still there are constants in every pattern; dates may differ but there is always seed time and the harvest and the constancies of nature and the assurances of what we know best and care for most. These have a tranquilizing power of which our times have great need. What is nearest no matter where is often, though not always, best and what is best is often, though not always, the simplest.

Preaching, one may hold, would better make much of this, though there are strange contradictions; a good sermon is both universal and parochial; universal because there is the universal in every parish, and parochial because it grows out of nearness.

This issue of the Quarterly will be read, if and as, mostly by preachers back from their vacations, and they should be profoundly grateful that the familiar "uses" and "wonts" of life are waiting for them and go into their pulpits with a sense of adventure as though they had never been there before and yet with a profound gratitude that they have been there so often: and thank God for the things which endure.